

LETTERS

8

ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND

ON THE

FOLLOWING SUBJECTS;

I. IS GOD THE AUTHOR OF
SIN?

II. ON DISINTERESTED BE-
NEVOLENCE.

III. IS IT A PART OF CHRIS-
TIAN CHARACTER TO BE

WILLING TO BE TREATED
AS WE DESERVE?

IV. DOES DISINTERESTED
BENEVOLENCE IN THE
HEART MAKE THE SUBJECT
THEREOF REGARD THE IN-
TEREST OF THOUSANDS A-
BOVE HIS OWN?

~~~~~  
"Wherefore doth a living man complain; a man for the punish-  
ment of his sins?"....JEREMIAH.

"Look not every man on his own things; but every man also on the  
things of others."....PAUL.  
~~~~~

The profits arising from the sale of these LETTERS are to go to
the EAST TENNESSEE BIBLE SOCIETY.

=====

PRINTED FOR JOHN STRAIN, ESQ. AND OTHERS.

=====

KNOXVILLE;
PRINTED BY
HEISKELL & BROWN.

.....
1817.

LETTER I.

TO. J. S. Esq.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE received from your pen a friendly judicious letter, written, as I believe, in the true spirit of *disinterested benevolence*. You say, you are a friend to what you call the new system of divinity in general; but that there are several modes of expression peculiar to it, to which you cannot be reconciled; namely, "that God is the author of sin; disinterested benevolence; and that we ought to love God to such a degree as to be willing to be damned for the sake of his glory." It does not appear from the face of your letter, that you expected an answer; but as you have taken it for granted, that I, and those whom you are pleased to stile my brethren, are advocates for these modes of expression, it is desirable, that you should know exactly, what are our views. Perhaps others may labor under the same difficulties, of which you complain; if so, an answer may possibly relieve them as well as yourself.

I am not willing to allow, that the sentiments to which you refer are new. They are demonstrably as old as the Bible. But every theologian will say the same thing of his own sentiments, be they what they may. Not to insist therefore on this point, I am confident the system is essentially or radically the same with the doctrines of the reformation, as taught, particularly by Calvin, and adopted by our church in its confession. There is, indeed, some improvement in the clearness of scriptural demonstration, and in shewing the connexion and consistency of the doctrines

of divine revelation. Those, who receive Dr. Hopkins' explanation of the doctrines, which are contained in the bible and in our confession and catechisms, are called Hopkinsians, in opposition to those who receive the Light and Motive scheme ; or those who adopt a system of Calvinism moderated or qualified by Arminianism ; or finally, to those, who choose not to follow pure Calvinistic first principles to their legitimate issue.

But it is not my design to spend time to shew that the system is one with the doctrines of the reformation ; every well read divine, acquainted with the system, knows this is the fact.

You have candidly confessed, if there be any novelty, it consists in the modes of expression. I will venture to say, the same candor will lead you to acknowledge that no writers have more accurately, and perspicuously defined the terms which they use.

I will now consider the objections of your letter. Is God the author of sin ? I answer *no*. By author, I choose to understand an agent, whose agency directly and immediately produces an effect or event of any kind, the nature of which he approves. You are the author of the letter which I am answering : your thoughts, your will were employed in producing it ; and, perhaps your pen too. If you employed an amanuensis, he was the author of the shape of the letters, that compose the words ; but you were the author of the thoughts, or ideas and words. Then God is properly the author of *that which is produced or brought about by his direct or immediate agency, the nature of which he approves, without any free agency coming between his agency, and the event so as to produce it* ; and no other being is the author of that thing.

Sin is in the exercises, volitions or tempers of the heart. Hence, it is evident, that there can be no agency between the exercise of the human heart and sin, to produce sin. Then sin belongs to the sinner

entirely ; it is his own act and deed ; and no other being's in the universe.

But at the bottom of this sentiment there is no belief with me, as with many erroneously called Calvinists, that man has a self determining power of will. Or, that his thinking and willing rest on a subtle undefinable *substratum*, as the Indian philosopher had the world to rest on the back of a deer, and the deer to stand on the back of a tortoise. The earth hangs balanced well on God's firm *decrees* ; so does the existence of every creature. We have no principle of self-existence, or self-action " the heart of the King is in the hand of the Lord ; he turneth it whithersoever he will." " Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to *think* any thing as of ourselves ; but our sufficiency is of God." " In God we live, move, and have our being." According to Solomon, the heart of the King is in the hand of the Lord, and he turns it as he pleases. But, if the King's heart is in the hands of the Lord, from analogy, the hearts of all intelligent beings from Gabriel down, are also, in the hand of the Lord, and he turneth them as he pleases ; yet sin is in the exercises of the heart, and belongs exclusively to the heart.

According to Paul, our sufficiency even to think a thought is of God ; and we have our being with all its movements in him. Paul, it seems, had not adopted the modern philosophy, falsely so called ; namely, that, when God made all things, he imparted to them principles of action and self-motion, and retired, leaving them to work their own way. Both Solomon and Paul have spoken according to sound *philosophy*. Every thing, existence and event may be arranged under the two grand *genera*, *cause* and *effect*. The mind of man cannot conceive a thing that does not belong to one or other of these. Then thinking and willing are either cause, or effect. If they can with truth be ranged under cause, then they are uncaused. But whatever is uncaused is self-existent, eternal, inde-

pendent, and every where present. Then *thinking* and *willing* wherever found, are self-existent, eternal, &c. But these words express exclusively the attributes of Deity ; then, thinking and willing, wherever they exist, are really and truly God. Who does not see at first blush the absurdity and folly of such a conclusion.

Then *thinking*, and *willing* in creatures are effects. Effects of what ? Of the providential agency of God. Adam had a first perception, and a first volition, with which his mental existence commenced. It will be admitted that God directly and immediately created his spirit ; that is, his divine creative agency produced a *thinking, willing existence*. The first perception could not produce a second, without assigning to it creative power ; nor, indeed, could any thing else, except the almighty energy of Jehovah. Our sufficiency to think a thought is of God. " There is a spirit in man : and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding." Job 32, 8.

It may be satisfactory here to introduce and establish a distinction of some importance ; namely, that *volition as existence or being is distinct from its sinfulness or holiness*. The one is real being or entity, the others are the qualities of being, or predicates necessarily belonging to an existence of a particular kind under particular circumstances.

If the distinction just made be not admitted, no reasonable doctrine of mental identity can be maintained. A being consisting of several constituents is the same. But if one of the constituents be taken away, it destroys the sameness of the being ; or if one be taken away and another substituted directly opposite in its nature, the sameness is destroyed. If the limb of a tree be cut off, and another grafted in from a different tree, this would not destroy the identity of the tree ; because it would be a tree without the limb. But if the removal of the limb would have destroyed the being or species of the tree, a limb from another would not restore either of them.

1. Volition is an exercise or act of the will which has its whole existence in successive volitions. But each volition has the same entity or essential being that the will has; and if sinfulness be the very being of the volition; holiness being an existence the very opposite of sinfulness, when the volitions of the sinner become holy, there would be a total change of the being, and these opposite existences cannot constitute the same individual will.

2. If there be no distinction between volition as being or entity; and sinfulness or holiness; then sinfulness is the proper object of *good will*; and it would be contrary to every dictate of benevolence to wish its destruction in any case.

3. If the distinction be rejected, the difference between natural and moral ability and inability falls to the ground. If sin be the very being of volition, then sin is as much a natural existence, as any other existence; of course it would be naturally impossible for a will, that consisted of sinfulness to be an existence, that consisted of holiness; for the last would be the destruction of the first; or rather they would be two distinct beings, that could no more constitute the same individual will, than Satan and Gabriel can be the same individual at different times.

It will be necessary, however, to guard against inferring from this distinction, that *volition* may exist without sinfulness or holiness. Volition is a necessary existence. Let any man try to stop thinking and willing, he will soon find how vain the effort. The very trial would be a volition. He could as easily cease to be, as cease to *will*. Volition is not only necessary, but it is also necessarily sinful or holy, because they all take place under moral law and can no more exist without one or the other, than matter can exist without some shape or figure. But one figure rather than another is not necessary to the being of matter, nor is its particular figurability a constituent of its being. So sinfulness or holiness belongs necessa-

rily to volition; but there is no necessity, that it should be one rather than the other, arising out of the nature of its being. God may create matter and determine under what figure it shall exist; but he cannot create matter existing under no shape. He may likewise produce volitions and determine whether they shall be sinful or holy; but a rational creature cannot have volitions that are neither sinful nor holy. In the case of matter the existence is wholly inert; but in the other case the existence is voluntary exercise preceded by perception. And every man has the evidence of his own consciousness, that when two objects are presented, he may choose either of them; and that he is under no natural necessity of choosing malevolently, rather than benevolently.

Perhaps these arguments may be too much compressed for the plain man, unacquainted with metaphysics, to understand; but the logician and philosopher know, that it would be worth their characters to oppose them. And the plain man can easily see, that they are in their conclusions, at agreement with the express language of holy writ. Then, according to scripture and sound philosophy, to God alone belongs causation, and he alone is uncaused. While he is the holy efficient cause of all our thoughts and volitions. There is no agent between him and these effects, causing them, and producing them. But before God could be the author of sin, his agency and causation must include an approbation of sin and so be sinful; to suppose which would be blasphemy.

If a man should tell me, he meant no more by the expression, "author of sin" than what is fairly implied in the above scriptures; I would tell him, his ideas, then, were right; but that he offended against propriety of language by the use of the phrase. And, if he were a public speaker, I would importune him to drop it, and use more appropriate language.

Before I quit this point, I must take the liberty of shewing the agreement between my views and our

excellent confession of faith on this point. I have always felt that this would be an easy task, not only on this subject, but on every subject in that excellent book. Sometimes it has appeared, as if an opportunity to do this would be a privilege. And once I had a thought of doing it in an answer to Ely's Contrast. But it is more than probable I shall decline it, for reasons that may appear in this answer. But to return. The Confession says, chap. 5, sec. 4. The almighty power, "unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extendeth itself to the first fall, and all other *sins* of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission; but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be the *author* or *approver* of sin." They refer to the following texts. Rom. 11, 32 33, 2d Saml. 24, 1, with 1st Chron. 21, 1, 1st Chron. 10, 4; 13, 14, 2d Saml. 16, 10, Acts, 4, 27, 28, Psalms, 76, 10, 2nd Kings, 19, 28, Gen. 50, 20, Isai. 10, 6, 7, 12, 1st John, 2, 16, Psalms, 50, 21, Jas. 1, 13, 14, 17.

"God, the great creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose and govern all creatures, actions and things from the greatest to the least."

"God from all eternity, did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of his creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away but rather established." Chapt. 3, sec. 1.

My sentiments, and the sentiments of those whom you call my brethren, could not, I believe, be better expressed, than they are by the above quotations. We have no desire to explain away these articles of

our confession, or mitigate, and qualify them by the sophistry hatched in the school of James Arminius. I believe they express the sentiments of both your head and your heart as fully as ours. I wish I had good reason to believe the same thing of all who call themselves Calvinists and Presbyterians. I find that each of the points, you have given me to discuss will occupy a letter, if it be confined to any reasonable length. I therefore close this one by subscribing myself, yours affectionately.

ISAAC ANDERSON.

Maryville, Oct. 21, 1816.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR,

I PROPOSE to consider the second point to which you object in your letter ; namely, the use of the phrase, *disinterested benevolence*. You seem to think these words are very unsuitable to express that holy, heavenly frame of heart, which characterises a saint in the sight of God. I must candidly acknowledge, that I think our language does not furnish us with better. But let us appeal from our own private judgement to the standards of the English language ; for people will understand words as their dictionary explains them. In the second place, we will examine how good writers apply them. And, lastly consider, whether they can be defended in their application to discriminate christian character.

1st. How are these words explained by the standards of the English language ?

Disinterested ; Superior to regard of private advantage, not influenced by private profit, without any concern in an affair....**WALKER.**

Uninterested ; Not having interest....**IBID.**

Interested ; Concern, advantage, good, influence over others, share, participation, regard to private profit.
....**IBID.**

Johnson and Sheridan define these words in the very same way ; as also does Jones.

Disinterested ; Void of self interest, impartial, unbiassed....**BAILY.**

Interest ; Advantage, concernment, benefit, credit, power, right....**IB.**

Benevolent-ence ; Disposition to do good, kindness, kind, having good will....**WALKER.**

Benevolent-ence ; Good will, that sort of love which disposes one man to confer kindness on another ; bearing good will, favourable, friendly, affectionate, kind....**BAILY.**

Selfishness ; Attention to one's own interest without any regard to others ; selflove....**SHERIDAN.**

Johnson and Walker give the same definition.

Selfish ; Minding chiefly his own interest....**BAILY.**

Selfish ; Void of regard for others....**JONES.**

Permit me to close the rear in the words of St. Paul. "Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, &c."

Such are the definitions, given by the standards of the English language, of the words that are intimately concerned in the discussion of this subject. Agreeably to these definitions, *interested* and *uninterested* are opposing words ; and *disinterested* is properly opposed only to *selfishness*.

Nothing can be more easy and natural, than to distinguish between the interest, profit or advantage a person has in an object, transaction or event, and the regard or feelings of his heart towards that object, transaction or event. Interested or uninterested is applied to the first, and disinterested or selfish to the last, or the exercises of the heart. To illustrate this plain distinction ; General Washington had a great interest in common with the rest of his countrymen in the issue of our struggle for independence ; however, he was not influenced by interested, selfish or mercenary motives ; but was disinterested or impartial in his motives ; superior to regard of private advantage. This eminent man was so far from being void of regard for others, that he excelled in public affection.

Sometimes, these words are used in rather a metaphorical sense, and applied to the motives and regards,

of the heart toward an object, such a man's heart is interested in an affair ; that is, his heart, affections, or passions are excited, roused and engaged about the matter ; without meaning to express whether his heart is engaged selfishly, or benevolently. Another is actuated by interested motives ; that is, he is selfish or mercenary in his feelings. Again ; we say, such a man is uninterested in his feelings. We mean, he feels a coldness, apathy and indifference toward the object, whether it is the glory of God, religious principles, or public or private happiness.

Disinterested is sometimes used to express a person's having no concern or profit in an affair. But it is always in cases where the strong presumption is, that the motives and regard of the heart are involved. A disinterested witness is one, who has no profit in the decision that may be given in a law-suit. But if it could be proved, that he was the subject of the same motives, that a depraved man would be, had he as a witness, a special interest in the trial, he would not be called a disinterested witness. On the other hand, had a witness a special interest in the trial ; but it could be proved satisfactorily, that he felt as a good man would do, who was a witness, but had no interest in the affair, he would be properly called a disinterested witness. So that the interest, or the contrary, in the trial, is the presumptive proof, that the man's heart is selfish or disinterested. But I believe these words are never used, except when the motives of the heart about an affair are directly or indirectly intended to be expressed.

But suppose the words interested and uninterested, in general usage, and according to the dictionaries, did not exclusively relate to the connection between a person and an object or transaction, extra of himself and his improper attachments ; and that disinterested, did not apply exclusively to the right *exercises* of the heart toward that object or transaction, which is a supposition contrary to fact ; yet, if theological writers

tell us that they use the first to express the advantage or disadvantage we receive from something out of ourselves, and our selfish feelings to it ; and the latter to express righteous feelings toward that something, this ought to be sufficient.

2nd. We will shew how different writers use these words.

“ Self-love or selfishness consists in a moral agent’s placing his happiness in what he views as his own private personal interest, and in nothing else, in distinction from the interest or happiness of any other being, and in contradiction to it. Self-love regards nothing but self, as such, and subordinates every being and every thing to this, and opposes every thing which in the view of the selfish person opposes him, and his selfish interest.” HOPKINS. Vol. 1st, 348 546

How well does this agree with the definitions given by the dictionaries of the words selfish and interested.

“ Disinterested benevolence is pleased with the *public interest*, and the greatest good and happiness of the whole. This is the highest good to the benevolent person. In this he places his happiness, and not in the interest and happiness of any individual or of himself, any farther than it is consistent with the greatest interest and happiness of the whole, and really included in it, and serves to promote it.”

The next venerable name I will take is Scott, on James 1, 27.

“ Pure religion ; essentially consisted in disinterested, humble, self denying love to men for the Lord’s sake and from love to him ; without some measure of this holy love ; no doctrines, forms, confidence, high affections, real, or apparent devotion can prove a man an accepted worshipper of God.”

Let us hear next the celebrated Dr. Witherspoon.

“ Our affection to God seems to be capable of the same division as our affection to our fellow-creatures, benevolent, and *selfish*. I think it undeniable, that

there is a *disinterested* love to God, which terminates directly upon himself without any immediate view to our own happiness; as well as a discovery of our great interest in his favor." Lecture 7, on Moral Philosophy.

John Newton, whose praise is in all the churches, comes next. In the first of eight letters addressed to the Rev. Mr. S. he says "A *disinterested* desire of knowing the truth, with a willingness to follow it, is a preparation of the heart which only God can give."

In the same letter he says, "By nature self rules in the heart, when this idol is brought low, and we are truly willing to be the Lord's—the good work is begun"

Take a quotation from Dugald Stewart, whose literary fame is in all the world. Life of Robertson.

"The trade of authorship was unknown in Scotland; and the rank which that country had acquired among the learned nations of Europe, had been sustained by a small number of eminent men, who distinguished themselves by an honorable and *disinterested* zeal in the ungainful walks of abstract science."

If Dodridge may be heard, when he is in opposition to such imposing authority as Ezra S. Ely, hear him. Introduction to Paul's epistle to the Philippians.

"This epistle breathes, the warmest gratitude and most *disinterested* affection."

If the Spectator be authority for the use of language, we have all the right of his authority for the use of *disinterested*; and I know of no authority before which he must bend and bow, except E. S. Ely's.

Number 423, page 125, Vol. 6.

"This seeming unconcern gives his behaviour the advantage of sincerity, and insensibly obtains your good opinion by appearing *disinterested* in the purchase of it."

No. 467 page 312, Vol. 6. "We have still extant two orations of Tully and Pliny, spoken to the great set and bes princes of all the Roman Emperors, who no doubt heard with the greatest satisfaction, what even the most *disinterested* persons, cannot read without admiration."

Number 588, page 122, Vol. 8.

"The pity which arises on sight of persons in distress, and the satisfaction of mind which is the consequence of having removed them into a happier state, are instead of a thousand arguments to prove such a thing as *disinterested benevolence*"

Suffer me to quote Scott again. Chap. 2, 17, "Nothing can exceed the genuine magnanimity and disinterested love expressed in this most beautiful passage." See the same on Phil. 4, 10, 13.

Let me give you a quotation from the celebrated Harvey. Descant on creation. "He who tinctures the metallic dust, and consolidates the lucid drop; he, when sojourning on earth, had no riches; but the riches of *disinterested benevolence*, had no ornament, but the ornament of unspotted purity."

In connection with the sentiment of this devout writer take the words of Paul.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Phil. 2, 5.

Blair says "The moral and sentimental sublime, implies a contempt of *selfish interest*."

Dr. Brown's life by his son, page 112. "In acts of *disinterested* generosity, he had sustained losses to the amount of—&c." Page 143, "A cause that had induced the most honorable, and the bravest chieftains in Scotland *disinterestedly* to draw their sword, and sacrifice their property and lives in its defence."

Washington, the father of American liberty, letter to Gen. Lee. "No *interested* motives have influenced my conduct."

Every American will subscribe to the following character of Washington, given by a certain historian,

page 356. "Whose actions afford so many and such illustrious instances of wisdom and *disinterestedness*, and devotion to his country's service."

The same, page, 357. "Disinterestedness always made him prefer the advantage of his country to his own glory."

The British and Foreign Bible Society is justly the admiration of christendom ; the enlightened men, who give its annual reports to the world are not likely to make use of vain words.

Twelfth report. "The Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society have presented a donation of 5,000 rupees ; an act munificent in itself, and rendered still more valuable by the indication it affords of a *disinterested friendship* on the part of the elder Asiatic auxiliary."

Same report. "In this pure *disinterested* benevolence which can arise, it is presumed, from no other source than love to God and Man, and which has no other object than to promote his glory, and the temporal and eternal good of his creatures."

Letter from Rev. J. Read, written after his return from Caffraria, dated, Bethelsdorp, May 31, 1816.

"The labours of our late brother Vanderkemp, did not then appear to be very useful ; but he has made the name of a missionary so valuable by his *disinterested* behaviour, that a missionary is safer there, than, perhaps, he would be in many parts of England."

The Sunday school teachers' guide, by the Rev. J. A. Jones.

"Did the Son of God labour through a life of poverty, agonize in a death of torture for immortal souls ; and will you cast from you their interests ; because a little sacrifice of time and ease is required on the Sabbath ? Can you pretend to fellowship with Christ ? If *selfishness* has not chilled your blood at its fountain, let it rise into your cheek with the blush of holy shame, and be the signal from this hour, for rallying your retreating benevolence." Page 94-5.

The same. "Prayer keeps down the growth and influence of our natural selfishness."

I must now give you some extracts from the Baroness Stael Holstein's admirable review of German, French, and English philosophy. Vol. 1, page 3.

"At an epoch when *selfishness* is the prevailing evil."

Vol. 2, page 133. "I shall endeavor to show ; that the moral system which is built on interest, so strenuously preached up by the French writers* of the last age, has an intimate connection with that species of metaphysics which attributes all our ideas to our sensations, and that the consequences of the one are as bad in practice, as those of the other in theory."

Page 158. "We shall examine the arguments of Kant against morality as founded on *self interest*, and the sublime theory which he substituted in the place of this hypocritical sophism or perverse doctrine."

Page 163. "The philosophy of materialism has stuck its roots so deeply into the mind, so much irreligion has been the result of it, that those men ought to be regarded as benefactors to their country, who have combated a system so pernicious."

Page 188. "It is not from a want of understanding the moral value of what is useful, that Kant has separated it from the *beautiful* ; it is to ground admiration of every kind on absolute *disinterestedness*."

Page 210. "The systems of metaphysical materialism and selfish morality are *atheism* with a God."

Page 213. "Guilt has more grandeur when it arises from the disorder of inflamed passions, than when *personal interest* is its object ; how then allege that to be a principle of virtue which would dishonor vice itself."

Page 227. "The sentiment which makes us aspire

—*Namely, Infidels, Illuminees, and Atheists, who likes, may glory in being with them.

to immortality is as *disinterested*, as that which makes us find our happiness in devoting ourselves to the happiness of others."

Note. While you are in the midst of quotations from such a list of worthies, I wish you to stop so long as to determine, whether Mr. Ely's dissertation on the word *disinterested* is as learned and wise as we had a right to expect from such a book-making man; or so modest as we might expect from a young minister. The implication is; surely had Doddridge, Harvey, Scott, Stuart, Newton and all the rest been as critically wise as Mr. Ely, they would not have committed such unpardonable blunders, as they have done in the use of the word *disinterested*. Is it not passing strange! that it has been left to Mr. Ely to discover in the 19th century, the true meaning of that phrase, which so many of the wise and learned have mistaken? Noble discovery! O the virtue of critical Greek learning! Who knows but some pupil of his school will find out that *disbelief* means twice-belief; that is, a belief of double the conviction and ardor of mere belief without the *dis* at it. How would deists, infidels and atheists rejoice to have their guilt, scandal, and exposure to ruin swept all away by one such fortunate discovery.

The 22nd report of the general meeting of the London missionary society; composed by men distinguished for piety and talents; "Mr. Janz was a man of an excellent spirit, eminent for faith, self denial and holy zeal for God, an active, faithful, disinterested missionary."

The Rev. Thomas Passlar of Liverpool, speaking of the immortal Morrison, says, "I pronounce his name with greater reverence, than that with which my father taught me to pronounce the name of Howard; what the learned for ages deemed impracticable, Morrison has achieved alone, and by making that achievement in the translation of the scriptures (into the Chinese language,) he has secured for his name a

renown which time shall respect, and the decisions of the judgment day shall fix, and the ages of eternity perpetuate ; holy *disinterested* man.

An anonymous writer on the Lord's supper. "The only proper motives which can induce us to celebrate the Lord's supper, must flow from a heart disinterestedly attached to the character and laws and kingdom of Christ."

The Rev. Mr. Larey, of Serampore. "Sure I am that it is entirely contrary to the spirit of the gospel, for its ministers to be actuated by *interested* motives."

Horne on missions. "We first baptize our secular interests and evil tempers into the name of the *disinterested* and lowly Jesus ; and then contend for them, with as much warmth and pertinacity, as though they involved our salvation." Page 18.

"From the mercenaries of the christian church my soul turns with loathing. Though I could move mountains, they would remain immoveable ; but, you who were indeed *moved* to engage in the ministry by the Holy Ghost ; you are the *disinterested* benefactors of mankind." Page 25.

"We require in our missionaries a *disinterested* generous way of thinking." Page 92.

"When so many are calling you into the field of political or polemic discussion, certainly I may be bold in provoking you to love of the most *disinterested* kind." Page 176.

I must add one more quotation from Scott.

"If they were not disposed to accompany her out of *disinterested* love to God, and to the people of Israel, she could hold out no other inducement." On Ruth 1, 11, 14.

The authorities we have now produced ought to be amply sufficient to settle a dispute about a word. To these I could add a host more, were it necessary. Wherever the English language is spoken, in Asia, Europe or America ; and by whatever denomination,

Churchman, Methodist, Baptist, or Presbyterian, or whether, by an individual, or society, historian, philosopher or divine, or lawyer, if holy, impartial love; motives, or exercises of heart are to be expressed, they spontaneously say *disinterested benevolence*; love; motives or affections; nor do I know an unexceptionable writer who uses these words in a different sense.*

It is a question worthy of an answer, how the expression, *disinterested benevolence* came to be taken by some men, and in a few neighbourhoods, for *indifference* to all religious principles, and to all happiness or interest public or private? for neither English dictionaries, nor classical writers; justify or even excuse such a mistake.† Some take up this unfounded opinion for one reason, and some for another; and many are comparatively innocent in this mistake. But I believe it originated in known wilful opposition to the doctrine, *that God is to be loved supremely, for his own sake, and his glory to be*

—* I do not consider a book lately published by a Mr. Ezra S. Ely, called the Contrast, an exception to this assertion. That production is puerile, uncandid, and in every sense unworthy an answer. And this is the true reason why it has not been answered long since. The men, whose sentiments he has traduced and misrepresented, are men of honorable feelings; and such men are as particular in their choice of an antagonist, as they are in their choice of a bosom friend: and would feel as much above having it said, they have entered the lists with an unworthy opponent, as that they associated with improper characters. I know of more than one answer in manuscript to his contrast. One of which I hope will be published, merely for the sake of the good people of this country, who have no opportunity of detecting his book: and not with a view of contending with a very child. You may see a specimen of his fairness by comparing notes on pages 70, 72, 131, with Hop. Vol. 1, pages 309, 420, 596-7.

Nor is the Rev. W. C. Davis' gospel plan an exception. Although a man of real talents; he is yet very heretical; as the judicatures of the church have declared.

† This would be the meaning of uninterested, when applied to the feelings or state of the heart.

sought as the ultimate object. Some who oppose this great doctrine are men of address and talents, and they employ all their art to make their opposition to truth pass for zeal for it. They pun upon words, confound distinctions, and address the passions of the people ; all to make proselytes. Others are opposed to it for want of examination, taking it for granted, those who ought to know, have examined, and have taught them correctly. Others from an over fondness for their powers of *criticism*. They have seen in the spelling book that the addition of *dis* to a word, often changes its meaning ; as approve, disapprove ; hence they infer, without the apprehension of a mistake, that *disinterested* is diametrically opposite to *interested*. Hence they are also ready to suppose it was for want of this happy mode of criticising, that dictionaries have been unfortunate in their definitions, and authors unfortunate in the use of the words. Others are purely selfish in their opposition. It is their interest to prevent some men, and some things and places from being popular ; and mere circumstances have made this the proper string to harp upon.

I must believe you are as innocent in your opposition, as it is possible to be, for you say, “ we know there is a supreme love we owe to God above all things, our own interest not excepted.” This you call *interested love*. But I am persuaded from your known candor, you will acknowledge by this time, this is an offence against appropriate language as established by use.

You will not say that I am supporting a doctrine by dictionaries and uninspired writers. No sir, it is only what is the appropriate use of a word ? We do not differ in ideas and sentiments on this subject ; only about proper words to express our ideas.

3d. Is there any good reason for discriminating christian affection by *disinterested*, *love*, *benevolence*, *motive*, and *affection* ; for these all mean the same thing ?

Love is a word that applies to several distinct subjects. Its applications will be best understood by first considering the nature of man. Man is compounded of an animal and mental existence. To our animal nature belongs exclusively a number of affections, that get the same name with a number of affections that belong exclusively to the soul. The affection between husband and wife, between the sexes, between parents and their offspring, are animal affections ; and are called by the common name *love*. The mind perceives the existence of these affections, and wills about them ; but the perceptions and exercises of the mind are not these animal affections themselves ; nor does the will change them ; but may direct and restrain them. We are also the subjects of pity, sympathy, gratitude, and various local attachments, which are denominated affections. The love and affections now considered, are in themselves neither sinful nor holy ; they belong essentially to our very nature ; the believer and unbeliever are equally possessed of them. And that change which converts a sinner into a saint does neither eradicate them nor alter their nature ; grace may, and indeed does restrain and improve them. We discover the same affections in mere animal creation.

We are also the subjects of a *love*, that belongs exclusively to the soul, which may be thus represented. The understanding has an object presented to it, and has a distinct perception of its properties ; the will acts towards it, in exercises called *good will*, choice, approbation and delight. These exercises of the will are called *love*. This love is purely mental : and there is a plain distinction or two, that belongs to it.

1st. There may be an approbation, choice, or delight in the will in the view of the object, solely, because the person thinks it is connected with his private, separate interest and advantage : this is *selfishness*.

2nd. The will may choose, approve, and delight in the object, solely on account of the qualities and properties of which the object is possessed; this is the love of complacency.

3d. The object may be capable of happiness and misery, and the will may exercise strong desires, and wishes for its well-being: this is called the love of good will. The two last are called *disinterested* benevolence.

Aside from all names of distinction, the will is plainly the subject of these three exercises. It is certainly important to know, when we speak of one or of the other; and the words, that have been used for this purpose, are plain and easy.

Again; benevolence, is used to express a holy, upright state of heart; but not exclusively in this sense. The sympathies and affections which we have from our very constitution and creation, when acted out, get the name of benevolent affections; as, for example, pity, and compassion; when they lead us to supply the poor, or relieve the distressed. But the unregenerate have these affections, as well as the regenerate. It is certainly not safe to use such language as may lead people to think that these original affections of our nature constitute true religion in whole or in part. Nothing is more common, than to say of a kind, humane and compassionate man, he is a benevolent man. Are we not to make the necessary distinctions? Most certainly. Then, as *disinterested* applies to the exercises and motives of the heart exclusively, and marks out the moral quality of the motives; what word more suitable? If we merely speak of benevolence, it may be asked, what kind of benevolence? Is it the tenderness and kindness of unregenerate men, that is meant, or genuine holiness? But, if we say *disinterested* benevolence; no other question can be asked, if the words are understood; for they mean in their plain and obvious import *impartial good will to God and man*. Then the alliance of the adjective

disinterested, with love, benevolence, motive, and affection, is natural and appropriate, and is according to the nature and reason of things. And it is a word easy to the organs of speech. But let us look at the union of interested with benevolence or love. Interested means regard to private advantage : then interested love means a love that regards no interest or concern, but my own private, separate advantage. This is the import of the words as established by use. But your letter condemns a religion of this kind ; and every real christian abhors it. When interested is applied to the motives of the heart, it means the same thing as selfish.

I would now go on to show that the Bible is full of that religion I call *disinterested*. “Charity seeketh not her own.”* But this you do not desire, for your letter is filled with it. However, take the case of Job ; satan accuses him of having no sort of religion but interested or selfish, Job 1, 9, 10. The Lord gave him permission to take from Job all, for which, he considered, Job served God. It is done. Job sticks to his integrity. Satan then says, I did not take in enough in the reward when I first accused ; “skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life.” Go, says God, and make his life a curse to him. It is done. And Job’s wife reproaches him for retaining his integrity, and bids him curse God and die. His *disinterested* heart replied, “Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” I have not heard of satan’s advocating selfish or interested religion since. Shall we be less orthodox than satan? But this letter has swollen to an immoderate length. I must come to a close by making two remarks.

1st. We are, without regeneration, the subjects of

* See Rom. 15, 1, 3. 1st Cor. 13, 5. 2nd Cor. 5, 15. Phil. 2, 21. 2nd Tim. 3, 2, and the first chapters of Job, where the question is debated and settled.

all the love, and benevolence of which we are capable, except the two last, which I noticed in explaining the exercises of the will. The love there described, towards God, his law and kingdom, is only produced by the spirit of God.

2nd. We may have *disinterested love* to an object in which we have the highest interest. Hence we see why it is, God addresses our fears, hopes, and love for happiness, to persuade us to love and serve him with *disinterested affection*.

I am, &c.

I. ANDERSON.

Maryville, Oct. 23, 1816.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME

DEAR SIR,

THE last thing objected to in your letter, is a particular mode of expressing the doctrine of unconditional submission. The mode of expression of which you complain is this ; *genuine submission or humility implies a willingness to be damned, if the glory of God should require it.* I do not propose answering you any otherwise than by exhibiting, what I believe the truth on this subject.

You will admit there is a distinction between the precepts and penalty of the divine law. And also between the transgression of law, and the suffering of the penalty of law. Without these distinctions we should be subject to the greatest confusion in our conceptions of many divine subjects, and would run into gross absurdities. To mention but one ; most christians believe Christ suffered the curse of the law in the room of sinners ; then, if the above distinctions are not admitted, Christ transgressed the law, which is contrary to the whole word of God. Some understand the word damnation as embracing in its proper meaning, both the malignant temper of the heart, which is the transgression of the law, and the sufferings inflicted by the government of God on the transgressor for his crimes ; this, to me, is to confound all distinction between precept and penalty ; sin, and suffering, for sin. Neither the English word damnation, nor the words in the original (*krima, krisis*) of which it is the translation, properly mean both

these things ; but only *that punishment to which a sinner is righteously condemned by his judge for his transgression of law.* But I admit that people generally understand it as including both, and the mistake is not a dangerous one ; for, in the perfect moral government of God, none will be damned but sinners ; and no impenitent sinner will finally escape damnation. But still, sin and its punishment are distinct. I am willing, also, to admit, that the expression, *willing to be damned*, conveys a wrong sentiment to ninety nine hearers out of an hundred ; therefore I do not use it ; nor approve of others' using it. But now I have conceded all you are to expect.

I am now ready to state, what I do and must defend, as I must answer for it at the bar of God ; namely, *that it is in the very nature of true religion, to make us willing to be treated as we deserve.* This very temper is that with which religion commences in the heart of a sinner, and is among the brightest, and most glorious features of true religion through life and through eternity.

On this subject I could dilate with pleasure ; but the brevity of a letter forbids it. The sentiment is supported by the following arguments.

1st. "I love them that love me." Proverbs 8, 17. God has no love for sinners, but the love of good will ; such a love as a good man may have for a fellow man whose character he hates. The Lord is angry with sinners every day, Psalms 7, 11, 12, &c. Mal. 1, 3, Rom. 9, 13, and he repeatedly declares he has no complacency in them. Rom. 1, 18, Deut. 32, 18, 19, 26, 40, 42, and as repeatedly declares, that he only loves them who love him. John 14, 21, 24, John 16, 27.*

And indeed it is morally impossible that God should love sinners, (except with the love of good will ; John 3, 16, Eph. 2, 4, 5, 1 John 4, 9, 10, Rom.

*Do take your Bible and examine those texts.

5, 8,) for they are unlovely, their hearts are opposed to all that is good ; and to love and be pleased with a sinner, would be to be sinful ; Psalms 50, 18. Then, if there ever be any complacential love between God and the sinner, the sinner must first begin to love God. And there is always good ground on which the sinner may begin to love God ; for God is always the same, and infinitely lovely. And as soon as the creature begins to love God, then he has something in him which God can love. But before the creature begins to love God, his justice, holiness, and truth, are all opposed to him as a sinner, and stand in dreadful array for his destruction. Then with just such views of God the sinner must submit to him and begin to love him ; for he cannot know, that God will have mercy on him, until the spirit bears witness with his spirit, that love to a holy and sin-avenging God is in him ; and, sir, this is an argument that all the sophistry on earth cannot refute, or gracefully gainsay. Lev. 26, 41, 42 ; “ If their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept the punishment of their iniquity ; then will I remember my covenant.”

I once heard of a preacher who solemnly told the people from the pulpit, that this punishment meant temporal punishment. God preserve me from such comments on his word ! “ I will appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague ; ye shall be slain by your enemies ; and if ye will not be reformed by me by these things ; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins ; I will send the pestilence on you ; ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters ; I will cast your carcases upon the carcases of your idols ; I will make your cities waste ; I will bring the land into desolation ; ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up ; they that are left shall *pine away in their iniquity.*” This is the connection of the passage. Now, sir, suppose such a

punishment brought on this land, how soon would those who fell under it, survive it? The endless ages of eternity alone would measure their misery. And do such evils involve temporal punishment only? What then would imply eternal misery?

2nd. If we consider what sin deserves, we shall soon be convinced that eternal misery alone is the just desert of sin. Against whom is sin committed? against an infinitely holy God, and in violation of a perfect law; then it deserves eternal death. What evil would the uncontrolled tendency of sin produce? Infinite mischief to God and his kingdom: then the sinner deserves to feel as much evil as his sins have a tendency to produce; Deut. 19, 19. "Sin deserves God's wrath and curse both in this life and the life that is to come," Gal. 3, 10.

3d. What is humility? It is not a painful envious sense of another's superiority. Nor is it the submission that an inferior owes to a superior. Nor is it the condescension of a superior to an inferior. Nor is it involuntary abasement. What then? It consists in self-abasement. Being willing to lie as low as our sins deserve; Luke 15, 19, Job 42, 6, Gen. 32, 10. The humble sinner approves the justice that condemns him, and is willing to bear the punishment he deserves. This was the temper of Eli: 1 Saml. 15, 25, 26. This was the temper of David, when he saw thousands falling under the avenging sword of the destroying Angel. "Even I it is, that have sinned, and done evil indeed, but as for these sheep what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord, my God, be on me, &c." 1 Chron. 21, 17.

4th. "Accept the punishment," &c. Can any humble disciple of the meek and *disinterested* Jesus thus complain? *My heart revolts at the thought of being in the hands of a righteous and holy God so completely and absolutely as this.* Is not God to be trusted without limitations and conditions? If not, who will impose them on him? Or can God be too

much exalted in the hearts of his creatures? Or can a sinner feel too much self abasement? Do you admit that sin deserves God's wrath and curse both in this life and that which is to come? Do you admit, that it would be righteous in God to inflict this deserved punishment? Must you approve, or disapprove of God's justice in order to be a christian? Did a man ever approve of that which he was not willing to accept? Consult your own heart for the answers. It must reply, it cannot help it; acceptance and approbation of an object of choice, are the very same thing. Your heart, your conscience, your Bible, all tell you, that heart-felt religion approves of the law in precept and penalty; approves of the truth, justice and holiness of God, which incline him to execute the sentence of the law on all sinners. And can your conscience and Bible also tell you, that it is not right to have a heart-felt acceptance of the punishment of your iniquity? Impossible. Can you distinguish between the exercise of approving of Christ as he is exhibited in the gospel, and accepting him as a Saviour? Just as easily as you can distinguish between sin and a transgression of the law. The hearts' approving of an object is the hearts' acceptance of that object.

5th. Let us look at the reasonableness of this sentiment. The government and law of God are holy, just and good. It is righteous in God to carry into execution his law; and the heart that does not feel so, must be in a state of rebellion; but God cannot receive one in such a state. Again, sinners are not prepared to accept mercy who are not willing to *sink as low as divine justice can sink them; or who do not see and approve God's justice, and freely resign themselves into his hand.* Let me illustrate this. A son has offended in so high a degree, that it becomes a duty in the father to chastise him; the son attempts to escape; the father commands him to come back; the son replies, I will come to you, if you will not chastise me; if the father agrees to this

condition, then the son has a claim on the father to go free from punishment, and does not feel that it is an exercise of mercy to let him escape. But, if the father tells him plainly he must come back without any condition ; and the son returns feeling, he deserves punishment, willing to accept it, and approving of that trait of character in his father which inclines him to chastise an offending son ; he not only shews a right temper towards his father and justice, but is prepared to feel, if his father forgive him, that it is mere mercy, an unmerited favour. And if he sees, that it becomes consistent with family government, for the father to pardon him through the merit of another brother, how will it endear that brother to his heart ? Through this medium he will accept his father's favour. But this will not destroy the willingness in him to be treated as he deserves ; and this willingness is so far from destroying his hope or assurance of his father's favour, that it is the experimental ground on which he is sure of enjoying that favour ; for he knows his father looks on this temper in him and is pleased.

Let me ask what would be the feelings of good citizens, who had been present at the trial of a murderer, and heard his guilt proved plainly, when they saw him executed, would they not all approve ? Will not the righteous all approve of the condemnation of the wicked at last ? Suppose the murderer just before his execution became a good man ; what would his feelings be ? Would his goodness of heart be the very opposite of goodness of heart in others ? Or would he not join with them in approving his condemnation and execution ? Surely. Would it not be very incongruous for the saints in the judgement day, to join in the sentence of the condemnation of the wicked, seeing they deserved the same condemnation, if they were not willing to accept of it ? Would this be doing to others, as we would that others should do to us ?

Some, to avoid the conclusion of these arguments, ungenerously confound the *willingness*, of which I have been speaking, with *desire*. Let us try to what this confusion will lead. Our catechism tells us that the tenth commandment requires a full contentment with our own condition. And it refers us to Heb. 13, 5, and 1 Cor. 10, 10. The first is, "Be content with such things as ye have." The latter, "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured." Let me suppose a condition. A man is cast into a dungeon, his wife and daughters are prostituted before his eyes, and then his whole family sold for slaves to cruel task masters. He is to be fully content, willing to submit; yet he may honestly desire to change this condition; but this desire must be under such government, as that the man would not willingly do wrong to change his state. Would it not be uncandid to say, that the catechism or the Bible requires him to *desire* such a condition, because they require him willingly to submit to the providence of God; and thus bear his state without murmuring? "Wherefore doth a living man complain; a man for the punishment of his sins?" Sam. 3, 39. Again, Paul tells us "If I be an offender or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die." Acts 25, 11. Paul was willing to die, if he deserved to die; but it would be ridiculous to say, that he desired to die the death of a criminal.

Many christians are willing to bear poverty, persecution and even death for the sake of Christ and his kingdom; yet no man in his senses desires and wishes for these evils.

I have now given you my views on what you deemed exceptional things in what you style the new divinity. I believe, my brethren agree with me. If your difficulties, or rather objections, are removed, I shall be amply compensated. I feel that your letter is answered. If you should feel so too, then others may have relief by seeing this answer. You are at

E

liberty to let them have the opportunity, in any mode you think best. I have not taken your letter paragraph by paragraph and answered it ; this, I did not think the most advisable method. But, if these letters are correct, yours is answered ; and the plan I have adopted is the most concise. I fear this letter may be too concise ; I hope not.

May the Lord direct us all in our inquiries after truth, and bring us at last to his heavenly kingdom.

I am yours, affectionately,

I. ANDERSON.

Maryville, Oct. 25, 1816.

In support of the doctrines advocated in this letter, you may consult Math. 23, 11, 12, and 16, 25 ; Mark 8, 35 ; Luke 9, 24 ; and 17, 33 ; 1st. Peter 5, 6.

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR,

THERE is one other subject for the defence of which the poor Hopkinsians have had to bear the keenest reproaches of *selfishness* ; namely, *disinterested benevolence in the heart makes the subject thereof regard the interest and welfare of thousands, above his own interest ; or makes him willing to lose his own interest to secure an equal good to each individual of a whole nation or the world.*

Hopkinsians do not advocate this sentiment from having made a low estimate of the value of their own souls ; or from feeling an indifference to their eternal welfare. They have estimated the unspeakable value of their souls by the infinite ransom given for their redemption, *the blood of the son of God* ; also by the endless duration of their existence. They have been taught, that the soul is made for endless progression in capacity and energy ; that the time will come when one soul will have more capacity and power of action than the whole sum of capacity and energy now possessed by the whole creation. They know that this amazing capacity shall be filled with all the bliss-giving plenitude of a God ; or with the burning floods of his wrath throughout eternity. What then is the value of one soul ? They feel, that should creation be more than taught by astronomy “ worlds on world, redouble that amaze, ten thousand add, add twice ten thousand more, and weigh the whole, *one soul outweighs them all.*” But with all this value,

the soul of a Hopkinsian is not worth more than the soul of his neighbour ; and that religion which rectifies the disordered mental vision, has taught him to see things as they are ; and grace has taught his heart to regard them according to their value.

There are some first principles, which scarcely any mind ever seriously doubted. When a doctrine stands fairly on such principles, it requires a degree of hardihood to oppose it, that I wish not to possess. The following will be admitted as belonging to these self-evident truths ; namely, *that the value of a soul, as an object of benevolence, should be estimated according to its capacity to do and receive good ; and that equal portions of such capacity, are of as much intrinsic value in one soul as in another.* It is admitted that one soul may have more capacity than another ; and of course more intrinsic value. But the portion of capacity in the least capacious, is worth as much as an equal portion of capacity in the most capacious. It is also admitted, that of two souls of equal capacity, one may be so connected with society, as to have more influence than the other, and greater opportunities of doing good ; but this difference does not arise out of their capacities, nor affect their intrinsic value.

A second self evident truth which none can seriously dispute, is, *that things should be viewed and regarded as they are in fact.*

Deny either the one or the other of the above principles and it is impossible to shew the reasonableness or justice of the divine law. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self ;" that is, with the same kind of love, the degrees of which are to be regulated by the evidence, the mind has, of our respective capacities to do and receive good. But I am not to love my neighbour with a love of good will, equal to the love I have for myself if I have as much capacity as a score of such neighbours ; yet I am to love him with the same kind of love, and the degree is to have

the same proportion to the degree of the love I have for myself, that his capacity bears to my capacity. On the other hand, if I am convinced that my neighbour has twenty times the capacity I have, I am to have the same kind of good will for him, that I have for myself ; but twenty times as great.

Again ; the precept " as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise," grows out of the divine law. But surely there can be no propriety in such a precept, if the existences be not of a kind, and the quantity of capacity in one man be not intrinsically as valuable, as the same quantity in another man. Whoever is fond of the task may deny the above principles, and then undertake to justify the second table of the moral law, and this golden gospel rule. For my part I should feel as awkward, as if I should undertake before mathematicians to refute a theorem built on the axiom, *the whole is equal to all its parts*. I will venture to say, no man will think of denying the above principles, unless he feels, that he has a system to defend, which would be impossible, if he admitted their truth.

Let us now examine whether the doctrine, that is the subject of this letter, and which is so offensive and hateful to selfishness, does not stand firmly on these two pillars. If the soul of my neighbour be worth as much as my soul, then I am to regard it as being of equal value. The souls of two such neighbours are worth double as much as mine ; then I am to regard them in this proportion ; and a thousand such souls are to be viewed and regarded as a thousand times more valuable than mine. Then the matter is reduced to a small compass. Will I throw away that which I view and regard as a thousand times the most valuable, to save what I feel is only one thousandth part as valuable ? He whose faith is strong enough may answer in the affirmative ; but I could not say AMEN to the prayer ; Lord, increase such faith. But suppose the question answered in the affirmative ; and it

should be asked, why do you prefer the salvation of one soul to the salvation of thousands, each of which is of equal value? Would it do to reply, I do not prefer the salvation of one soul to a thousand; if the one be not my own? But suppose it is your own, what good reason could you render for such a choice? Will it satisfy your conscience and good sense to say I have no other reason but because I am MYSELF. Your next, and your next neighbour; yea, every individual of Adam's family may have the very same reason. *Because I am myself I prefer my own salvation to the salvation of the whole world; and it is in my judgement a greater good more devoutly to be wished.* This reason labours under some difficulties of no ordinary size. If it be a good reason for the choice and preference that is made, then God must regard it as such; of course prefer your salvation to your neighbours; yea, to the salvation of the world, and that too, for the reason, because you are *yourself*. But your neighbour has the same reason for making a similar choice; then God must prefer your neighbour's salvation to yours, or even the world's; and that for the reason because he is himself: what absurdity! what contradiction! and it is impossible to avoid this absurdity, while the only reason to be given for preferring my own salvation to the salvation of millions is, because I am *my beloved self*; and no better reason can be given.

Again, pardon, life, and immortal joys are an unspeakable good both to Paul and John. But can any reason be given by a third person why they are a greater good to John than to Paul? Both are to live eternally, both are to progress in capacity and felicity forever, and both, on the supposition are capable of enjoying an equal share of boundless goodness. The third person whom we have made umpire, readily admits the good is equal in itself considered to each. Would it be a greater good in itself considered, if these blessings were transferred to the third person?

He is not to exist longer, nor is he capable of greater blessedness at present; or of greater progression in capacity and felicity through eternity. Why then should the third person judge it a greater good, more ardently to be wished, that he should have these blessings, than for Paul or John to have them? Merely because he is himself. Is it not evident the judgement is erroneous; for how is it possible, that, that should be a greater good which is not in fact; and in reason's account is at most only equal? And is it possible that the judgement should not be erroneous which is not according to truth and reason?

Again, the reason that the selfish heart has for preferring his salvation to the salvation of a nation or even a world, namely because it is his *own*, and he is *himself*, is in God's account utterly inadmissible. When God condescends to assign a reason why he chooses one to salvation rather than another, that reason is never the one that outweighs, with the selfish heart, all other considerations; namely, because he is himself, for this would have been a reason equally as good for Esau, and Judas, as for Jacob and Paul. God's reasons arise out of his *own being, perfections and glory*. When God works the salvation or even destruction of a creature, his language is "I wrought for my name's sake." "Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for *your sakes*, O house of Israel, but for my *holy name's sake*."* God's glory, the display of his perfections for the good of his kingdom, and the perpetuation of his own infinitely full felicity, are the grand end of all God's counsels, and sovereign doings. And when a ransomed soul prefers his own salvation, solely, and purely for this reason, he may prefer it even to the salvation of countless thousands; because God has done it for the best possible of all reasons, *his own names' sake*. But such a ground of preference, is entirely different from the good in itself

*Ezk. 2, 9, 14, 22, 44, and 36, 22, see Psalms 25; 11, 106, 8.

considered ; or the reason, it is a good that comes to *me*, which is paramount to every other consideration with the selfish heart ; but in fact no reason with God. And what can it avail us to adhere pertinaciously to a choice, the ground and reason of which is plainly absurd, erroneous, and contrary to truth and reason ?

After all, if it can be proved that one soul is of more intrinsic value than some other one, or a thousand, then the most valuable one ought not to regard its interest as less or equal to the one or the thousand. Or if it can be demonstrated that each one is to feel his *own soul* more valuable than millions of others, because he is himself, although it is not true, then is the sentiment we advocate incorrect. But if one soul is as valuable as another, and a thousand souls a thousand times more valuable than one ; and if truth and reason require that it should be viewed so ; and religion require that I should feel as truth and reason dictate ; then, no good reason can be given that I should not esteem a thousand souls of more value than my own, and why I should not regard and wish my salvation only according to its comparative value. You must permit me to close this argument, by observing, I have always found it a happiness of the right side of a question, and of a just argument, that they are soon stated, easily understood, and cut to the quick. Judge ye whether this is the fact with the argument just finished.

There is a standard in God's universe, eternal, immutable, and every way perfect, by which the character of every rational creature will be judged. It is founded on the supremacy and divinity of the most high. Nothing can be added to, or taken from this *standard* without marring its beauty and perfection. Were all the nations dead it would remain the same. Yea, was *creation* blotted out of existence, and another system of intelligences created, this infallible standard would be its only law, for it rises out of the very nature of God, and the relation of creatures to

him, and one another. "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." This standard is the *divine law*. "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" This law allows, yea, commands us to love ourselves. If it does not determine the kind and quantity of love we shall have for ourselves, we have but to travel into some other part of God's book, and both questions are decided with all the clearness of the effulgent beams of the son of righteousness. Thou shalt love thyself with the *love of good will*; and if thou bearest the image of God, thou shalt love thyself with the *love of complacence*. Besides these two, there is no other *holy love*. What shall be the degree and continuance of this love? Its strength should equal the greatness of the object, the measure of which is, its progressive capacity for happiness, connected with its endless duration, and the continuance should be while life and being endure; of course endless duration alone will be the proper termination of this love. Here then is scope for good will towards *ourselves*, which scarcely any man's affections ever equalled. I need scarcely add our love of complacence for ourselves ought to equal the holiness we possess, and no more or less.

It being determined by the light of revelation what kind, degree and continuance of love we may, and ought to feel towards ourselves; let us now return and ask the standard, God's law, how must I love my neighbour? It replies in language too plain to be misunderstood, too forcible not to be felt; AS THYSELF. The same degree of *good will* which glows in thy bosom for *thyself*, should incessantly glow with equal ardour for thy neighbour of the same intrinsic value. And thou shalt feel complacency for him equal to the evidence you have of his disinterested benevolence. Love alone is the fulfilling of this law, but no love comes up to its demands, unless it be such love as we feel for ourselves. If this

law be infallible, and immutably perfect, then no doctrine is worth contending for which is hostile to its nature ; nor is any sentiment worth holding, that is not at agreement with its spirit. But the sentiment that flows fairly and directly from its requirements, we may be sure, is agreeable with the mind and will of Jehovah.

Having ascertained the infallibility, obligation, and purport of the divine law ; let us now try the doctrine under consideration by this perfect standard. I, if a christian, feel the same kind of good will for my neighbour that I do for myself. I regard his soul as equal to my own ; have the same ardent desires, as far as my desires are holy, for his eternal welfare in itself considered, that I have for my own ; for the best of reasons, because he has as much being and capacity of enjoying and doing good as I have, and because God requires it. Now suppose ten, twenty, or a thousand of my fellow-men individually equal to myself are presented as the object of my good will ; then the ground and obligation for exercising good will would be increased ten, twenty, or a thousand times ; and if I love each one as I love myself, I love the thousand, a thousand times more, that is, they are a thousand times more the object of my ardent desires for their eternal welfare, than I am *myself* ; and if I do not thus feel, it is evident, that I do not enter fully into the spirit of the divine law. But bible-saints did both understand and enter into its spirit. David says "Thy law is my delight ;" and Paul says ; "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man." Had these two eminent servants of God felt that they did not love their neighbour as themselves, and a thousand of their fellow-men a thousand times more, how could they say, that they delighted in a law that plainly required such an affection. But Paul puts the matter beyond all dispute ; "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." It is

easy to shew that this wish is at agreement with reason, and the spirit of God's law. And all the learned pains that have been taken to make this text speak a different language, have been so much pains to make it speak a sentiment below the requirements of the divine law and the sublime feelings of disinterested benevolence.

The covenant God makes with Israel implies that Israelis brought to this temper ; " I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people." What law is put into the hearts of God's spiritual Israel and there engraved by the pencil of divine grace ? The very law that says " thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*."

I cannot but imagine to myself some one grossly displeased with the above reasoning, as no doubt many will, who has a little of a logical turn, and scorns the low arts of working on popular prejudice and ignorance, he proceeds coolly to the work of refutation.

" It is admitted, because it would be too bare-faced to deny it, that the law requires us to love our neighbour as ourselves ; but it does not follow from thence, that I am to love two neighbours twice as much as MY BELOVED SELF. O SWEET SELF ! Who does not feel thy influence and own thy sway ? Although I acknowledge, take them individually, and I am to love each of them equally with myself ; yet when taken together I am only to love both equally with myself, for here the axiom, *that two equal numbers added together are double any one of them singly* fails, which is thus demonstrated ; a miser loves money with all his heart ; a guinea is money, therefore he loves it with all his heart ; a thousand guineas are only money, and the miser cannot love them with more than all his heart ; then, he does not love the one guinea more than the thousand ; and he would not give the one for the thousand unless he be a *Hopkin-*

stan." I acknowledge I cannot answer this reasoning ; and must, therefore, leave the mathematical metaphysician in possession of the joy and triumph of his argument, and pass on to consider whether the bible affords us any other aid.

The example of Christ next claims our attention ; which goes to this point ; *that an evil is to be submitted to, however great, if it will be the means of procuring an over-balancing good.* "He humbled himself, became obedient unto death, the death of the cross" endured bitter agonies, drunk the very dregs of the cup of wrath due to sinners, and bore the weight of their iniquities in his own body on the tree ; for *the sake of the glory that should follow.* What was the glory that should follow ? The manifestation of God's being and perfections ; the perpetuation of the divine felicity ; and the salvation of millions of lost sinners. The divine glory connected with the salvation of countless millions was, in Christ's view, a greater good than his dreadful sufferings were an evil ; therefore, he willingly "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." But this joy must be obtained by agonies, by blood and by death. Every blessing he procures for others costs his heart a groan. Then in this divine example of Christ we have the very sentiment, for which we contend, in full proof. "Let the mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus." Is it a greater good in itself considered, that a world, a nation, or even a thousand should be saved, or that you should be saved ? Or is it a greater good that they should be saved than your eternal ruin would be an evil ? If the mind be in you which was in Christ, will you hesitate what choice to make ? The only misfortune belonging to these questions is, that they are too plain and easy ; for the answer of *common sense* would be fatal to the cause of him who may be unfortunate enough to be in the opposition. As a proof that Christ's example goes to the support of our sentiment,

beside the whole history of his life and death, we might adduce the fact, that his heart was a perfect copy of the divine law. "Lo, I come : in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart ;" and this law requires the very sentiment we advocate. But who has faith strong enough to doubt whether the disinterested benevolence of Christ led him to bear the curse of the divine law, for the sake of a greater good than that was an evil : or who can doubt, if we have the spirit of Christ, whether we will be willing to bear everlasting ruin, if it would secure a good, millions of times greater than our salvation ? If we have not the spirit of Christ we are none of his.

It is a maxim with me, that whatever involves a self evident absurdity is necessarily false, and cannot be true, however plausible. And that must necessarily be true, when the supposition of its falsehood implies a palpable contradiction. Or if one or more arguments of the demonstrative cast prove a proposition to be true, it cannot be false, however apparently great may be the objections against it. We have shewn that the supposition of the falsehood of the sentiment, which is the burden of this letter, plainly implies absurdities and contradictions. And we believe the arguments advanced to prove its truth are of the demonstrative kind. But lest some may think, that they have objections against the doctrine which amount to a proof of its falsehood, we proceed to consider some of the most formidable.

Objection 1st. God does not require us to throw away our own salvation for the sake of saving others ; and did we do it, no good would be effected thereby, therefore the sentiment is not true.

God requires us to love our fellow-men as ourselves, and a thousand, each of equal value, a thousand times more ; from which generous disinterested love, the feeling objected to, naturally flows ; and if he does not require the sacrifice in fact, it is because it would

be no atonement for their sins ; and because he has an end to accomplish in the ruin of those who perish, and in the salvation of the individual, worthy of himself. It is impossible that this end should be taken into the view of the mind in making the choice between his own salvation and that of millions ; nor does it belong to the subject ; the choice is properly between two goods in themselves considered ; namely, the salvation of *millions*, or of *one*. The last part of the objection is perfectly idle, which is thus shewn ; I have a guinea in my pocket ; I feel, I do not value it equal to a thousand ; and I am conscious that I am willing to cast it into the sea, if I, by that action, would secure a thousand guineas. I am told, if I should cast my guinea away, I will not thereby secure a thousand ; then I will keep it, for it is on the condition of securing the thousand, that I am willing ; and a conviction that this cannot be done, does not take away the willingness founded on the supposition that it could ; nor does it take away the preference of a thousand guineas to one, although I cannot get the thousand.

Objection 2nd. He who has the testimony of God's spirit, with his own spirit, that he is born of God, knows that it is the purpose, decree and will of Heaven, that he should be eternally blessed ; then a willingness to give this eternal blessedness away, and sink down to endless despair, is a willingness to reverse God's purpose, will and decree.

Did this objection fairly lie against the doctrine, it would be sufficient to seal its ruin ; but it does not. The objection supposes, that the doctrine we advocate makes the choice lie between two objects, *the purpose of God* on the one hand, and *the salvation of the reprobate and destruction of a holy soul* on the other. But this is not the fact. The choice to be made, is between two objects entirely different ; namely, *the salvation of millions of souls*, or of *one*. If the question was, does disinterested benevolence

lead us to choose the salvation of thousands in preference to one, although it should be in opposition to the will and decree of Heaven? And we had answered it in the affirmative; then would the objection have applied in all its overwhelming force. The *will, decree or purpose* of God is paramount to every other consideration with the christian. And when the salvation of one soul, should that be his own, or of countless millions is put in competition with God's will, the first sinks in his view to be less than a grain of sand compared with the whole created universe. Suppose a christian is called to choose between the loss of his little finger, or his head; he will not hesitate to determine "let me loose my little finger." But suppose he is told it is the will of God that you should loose your head; then the objects of choice are changed altogether. But the christian replies in this case as promptly as in the former; *Let God's will be done.* While the choice lay between the two first, considered by themselves and alone, the least evil is chosen, or the greatest good; but when the will of God comes to be associated with one of them, it gives that one an infinite preponderance.

This choice can never be made, either when we take into view the *will* of God, except in agreement with that *will*; or when we take into view the consequences on the great whole. For the knowledge of man is too limited to know what is good in this respect. Who can tell what shall follow as the consequences? Paul, and even we, can now tell, that it was best on the whole that he should be saved rather than the millions of his brethren and kinsmen that perished, because it has been agreeable to the wisdom and goodness of God which always chooses the best possible. But antecedently to God's having made it known that he had chosen Paul rather than them, no man or angel could have decided which would have been best, all things considered. The christian feels that when he considers his *own salva-*

tion, and the salvation of *perishing millions* by themselves and alone, unassociated with any other consideration, he prefers the salvation of *millions* ; to secure which, he would submit to what he views indescribably horrible, *eternal ruin* ; and he rejoices in the generous feeling ; but when he takes into view, that it is the sovereign purpose of God to save his soul while millions perish, he says, " God alone knows the consequences of every event on his kingdom throughout eternity ; and all his purposes are infinitely wise, good and holy, formed with a view to the highest possible good that omnipotence can accomplish, or infinite wisdom dictate ; then to reverse his purpose to save me, that millions might be saved, would be to reverse an *infinite good*, to secure a limited and diminutive good, unspeakably less than a grain of sand in comparison to the created universe."

The third objection, I shall notice is taken from John 15. 13. " Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But this doctrine represents the christian having as great if not greater love to strangers or even enemies. Besides, this text says no man can have greater love than to die for his friends.

Our Lord is here speaking of a natural affection rather than a gracious one ; such as exists between parents and children, husband and wife ; or between friends, taking the word in a restricted sense. It was in a great degree under the influence of this affection that David lamented the death of Absalom ; " O my son Absalom, my Son, my Son ; would to God I had died *for thee*." History furnishes several instances of this kind of love. Such appears to have been the love between David and Jonathan ; " I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been unto me : thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." Then this is as high, as this kind of love can go ; no man has a greater degree of it nor can have, than to be willing to lay down his life for his friends.

But if it be supposed that this love is a gracious affection, then it comes up to the standard, *love thy neighbour as thy-self*. Greater than this the law does not require ; nor more than this does any man possess, unless he is more perfect than the law requires. If this love values the natural life of a friend as equal to its own ; then, surely it will value the eternal life as equal.

But if this love be a gracious affection, it will not distinguish between a friend and an enemy in the exercise of *good will*. And in the love of holy complacency, no one is known as a friend from another ; but as one may have more of the image of God than another ; or the one may have it and not the other. " Who is my mother, and who are my brethren ? Whosoever shall do the will of my father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, sister and mother." And David says " Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee ? And am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee ! I hate them with perfect hatred ; I count them mine enemies." Here are characters that are not proper objects of complacency, and David expresses a feeling toward them, which is properly the opposite of complacency. To be willing to lay down our life for any one that is our friend in this sense is to love our neighbour as ourselves ; and greater love hath no man than this, nor can have of this kind.

But the measure of *good will* is not moral character, but capacity of receiving and doing good. If an enemy have more of this than a friend, then is he more the present object of good will. When this is the love spoken of, capacity alone entitles to the appellation of *friend*. Greater love of this kind, hath no man than to be willing to lay down his life for one of equal capacity with himself.

But if you will have it that the text includes all the three kind of affections, then the word *friend* must be explained according to the nature of affection.

Then it means three distinct things. For we have proved that the love of complacency knows no friend but in moral character ; and the love of good will knows no friend as a distinguishing term but in capacity ; and natural affection is not founded particularly on either of them. So take the text which way you will, it furnishes no objection against the doctrine. But I am inclined to believe the first is the true meaning.

Objection 4th. If our love to our neighbor, of equal value, is to be equal to ourselves, to two neighbors, twice as great, to a thousand, a thousand times as great ; then, would we be exhorted in the Bible, to exert ourselves for the salvation of a thousand, a thousand times more than for our own : but we have no such exhortations.

For the best of reasons we have no such exhortations. We have it in our power to do a thousand times more for ourselves than all we could do for a million of others. We may repent for ourselves, we may embrace Christ for ourselves and escape from the wrath to come ; and these are the exertions to which we are called by the Bible. But we cannot repent for others, we cannot embrace Christ for others, nor agonize to enter in at the strait gate for others. And boundless goodness always points exertion where it can effect most. And disinterested benevolence always chooses to work where most good can be done. For this reason ourselves are the first object of our exertions, our families next, for here we ought to have most influence ; next the town or neighbourhood where we reside, and so on.

The answers to the foregoing objections must be a sample to you that all others can be answered ; for I find this letter is growing beyond lawful bounds. But long as it is, you, perhaps, would not like it to close before an answer was given to a very solemn question, *Must all christians have the feelings described in this and the third letter, and be conscious*

that they have sensibly felt them ? He, who loves a child of God, because he bears the image of the meek and holy Jesus, is himself a christian according to the infallible decision of Christ, let him be puzzled as he may about applying other marks ; and he may never have tried himself by those two subjects particularly ; but whether he knows it or not the spirit of each of them reigns in his heart in some degree ; and whatever gracious affections he may have, there is nothing in them at war with those sentiments. Whatever depravity he may have remaining in him will rise in irreconcilable hostility to them, as well as to every other gracious thing.

But the more a christian enters into the spirit of those sentiments, and the more he is conscious that he honestly feels them, the more he is assured that he possesses a religion "that hypocrites could ne'er attain, which false apostates never knew," and the more he is satisfied, that the mind is in him which was in Christ Jesus.

She lays her own advantage by
To seek her neighbour's good ;
So God's own Son came down to die
And bought our lives with blood..... *Watts.*

The possession of no tempers will place his heart at such a remove from self-righteousness, legality, pride, anger, revenge and ambition. Nothing will so dispose him to forbearance, gentleness and forgiveness of injuries. He will know by experience something of the strength of the band of LOVE that binds a holy universe to God and to one another, and chains it in everlasting harmony. These sentiments, possessing the whole heart, raise the christian in the elevation of his happy soul to the enjoyment of a God. From this high elevation he looks down on all the earth calls good or great. He views the hurry and bustle of dying man to secure wealth, honor, titles or even earthly crowns and thrones, as "Ocean into tumult wrought, to waft a feather, orto drown a fly." That

we all may be filled with all the holiness of these sublime sentiments, and possess in full the joys they impart for time and eternity, is the prayer of your friend,

I. ANDERSON

L. James Hunt
8